**The Week Before Vacation**

By Nick Chanese

‘Twas the week ‘fore vacation,

And all through the school

The people were crazy

And acting the fool.

Students farted on desks,

And it smelled like raw death,

And some naughty students

Called their teacher a “neff.”

But the teachers at school,

Oh, they were no better.

They were showing bad movies,

And wearing bad sweaters.

All anyone wanted

Was to get out of there;

Ask them about school,

And you’d hear “I don’t care.”

And room ten sixty seven

Was the worst of them all;

The teacher was sleeping;

The students stared at the wall.

It was all bad news

In room ten sixty sev.

What they needed was something

To give them a rev.

Then, suddenly - a flash

And the chairs, they all shook,

And confusion arose

Until a student yelled “Look!”

In the corner stood a man

With such strange clothes on his parts,

That everyone assumed

He was from visual arts.

Room ten sixty seven

Was silenced with awe

Until the strange little man

Raised up his right paw.

“Greetings” was the man’s

Unique salutation.

“I’m a secular elf

Of no exact denomination.

“I’m down with Festivus,

And glowing menorahs,

With unity cups

Or Christmastime flora .

“Now I’ve heard of this place

That’s so full of the arts,

And I’m here to be inspired

By your acts and your thoughts.

“So tell me,” said the man

Of miniscule stature,

“Which art should I pick?

Which will move me with rapture?”

The students looked ‘round

With stunned hesitation,

But then one came forward

To offer summation.

“Dance,” this one said,

“Is the major of choice.

You don’t need a canvas

And you don’t need a voice.

“Just throw on some tights;

You’ll like how it feels;

But try not to worry when

Your shins pop out of your heels.”

“No, no!” said another,

“That’s not what you want.

Musical theater’s the thing,”

Said the student, nonchalant.

“With us, dancing and singing

Are equally cheered.

We become like a family

Where everyone’s weird.

We get to rehearse

For thousands of hours.

And if you get it just right

You’ll get pummeled with flowers.”

Another student shot up

And he shouted “What bunk!

The music department

If overflowing with funk!

“We’re the *real* singers

And bassists and drummers

And flautists and pianists

And kazoo players and hummers.

“We all wear our ear buds

With a great sense of pride;

Our hearing loss is well hidden

As we sway side to side.”

Another good student

Looked up from the page.

“Doesn’t writing, to you,

Sound like all the rage?

“We’re poets and prophets

And we think that’s great;

As for spelling and grammar?

Both those things can wait.

“We write about people

And explosions and flowers,

And about inappropriate subjects

We can go on for hours.”

The secular elf

Rubbed his hand on his chin;

“Psst,” someone whispered

“Now let *me* begin.

“I’m a theatrical person,

Almost always in black;

Theater has actors in the front,

But the real stars are in back”

“So you can give a big speech

Or take some fake punches,

Or you can use hammers and saws

And lose fingers in bunches.”

“Pish-posh!” cried another

Who stopped doing graffiti,

“Visual arts makes the most sense;

You come with us, sweetie.

“Here we use our two hands

To make things of beauty,

Like sculptures of kittens

All dressed up like hoochies

“You can mix up the paints

Until you find the right hue,

And then pour it on toilets,

At least, that’s what I do.”

The secular elf

Was mulling through choices

When he heard something new

From among all the voices

“Why not do something

That covers it all?

Inter-arts beckons you;

Just answer the call.

“We explore all the arts

Even three at a time;

We might paint a haiku

in a play done in mime.

“You could shoot your own movie

Or drop some phat beats

Write a musical tragedy

Or make clothes out of meats.”

The elf thanked all the students

For their time and their care,

But he had simply no clue

Which art to choose there.

Finally the teacher arose

And walked ‘cross the floor;

He pulled the elf to the side

And they stood by the door.

“Listen,” the teacher said

“Don’t listen to these lies.

An assistant principal, you are;

You’re just the right size.”

So they walked off together

To make the elf administration.

To one and to all

Have an art-filled vacation.